

9 March 2018

Dear Parents

On Monday 5 March students attended a special Assembly marking the school's 121-year history, which began in 1897 at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson's summer house in Aldeburgh, where the founder and Headmistress, Miss Margaret Isabella Gardiner, held her first lessons. Students also learned about Saint Felix, for whom the school is named and whose patronal festival is on 8 March. The saint, who lived during the 7<sup>th</sup> century and is also known as Felix of Dunwich, was the first bishop of the East Angles, and known for introducing Christianity to the region.

On Thursday 8 March we celebrated Saint Felix Day with a formal Chapel Service and all pupils and staff enjoyed a slice of celebration cake during lunch. In the evening, members of the Sixth Form enjoyed a formal dinner, and heard from guest speaker Mr Ian Greenfield, MD of Production Bureau, a creative communications agency in Norwich. From live events, exhibitions and video production to employee engagement for clients including Audi, Aviva and Brighton Pier, students received a welcome insight into possible careers within the creative industries. The main focus of his presentation was to encourage students to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

In a first for the school, as an additional Saint Felix Day activity, we are today completing a 27km walk from Aldeburgh to the school. At 8am this morning, along with 7 pupils from the Senior Department (to represent the original seven pupils that began at the school in 1897), I set off from Aldeburgh. At various points along the route, via Thorpeness, Sizewell, Dunwich, Walberswick and Southwold, we are being joined by pupils and staff from the Senior Department, Prep and Pre-Prep Departments.

By the time you receive this, we should all be safely returned to school and I look forward to seeing you at the celebratory tea that we have planned.

I am really proud of all the students and the great spirit they have shown in taking part in today's Walk. I feel that it is a good metaphor for the journey we have been on as a school starting from where we were founded in Aldeburgh with just seven students and finishing in Southwold where we are now based with several hundred students.

As many of you will know, we traditionally mark Saint Felix Day by raising funds for a local charity. This year, our chosen beneficiary is The Loft Youth Centre in Southwold, and sponsorship from those taking part in the walk as well as a generous donation from Sizewell B's Community Fund will all help The Loft to continue to provide a safe space for local children to participate in a variety of activities.

### **English Department News**

On Wednesday 7 March Senior Department students met for the annual Spelling Bee, in which students from each House pitted their wits against each other. Students were divided into Key Stages and each had to spell 20 increasingly difficult words correctly. This year saw keen competition in all age groups. In KS3 Indira Gopee (Rowell) defended her title, fending off the determined challenge of Imogen Whyte. Lily Talbot (Rowell) completed a hat-trick of victories for KS4, resisting an inspired performance by George Walker, who pushed her all the way. The Sixth Form winner was Nabila Haque (Pemberton), who led all the way. The winning House overall was again Rowell. The contest was enthusiastically supported and the audience acknowledged the courage and intelligence of the students who took part. There is a serious purpose to the Spelling

Bee as, with examination reform, spelling becomes an integral part of public examinations and a skill to which all students should devote time.

On a final note Mr Tim O'Connell, who has been a highly valued member of the school staff since his appointment in September 2007 as Teacher of Boys PE and Games, Head of Boarding and latterly as Head of Prep Department, will be leaving at the end of the Summer Term to take up the Deputy Headship of a Prep school in the South West of England. I will begin the process of finding his successor in the coming weeks.

Please note that I shall be away next week meeting parents and students in China. During this period, Ms Annie Hardcastle will be acting Head. I wish the school all the best during my absence.

**Diary Dates:**

**Monday 12 March**

- Sixth Form mock examination week commences
- Commonwealth Day Observance Service Westminster Abbey  
*Heads of School to attend*

**Thursday 15 March**

Lunchtime Music Concert for music examination candidates

Mr James Harrison  
Headmaster